

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

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R 190954Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8475

INFO USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 6883

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LE, SY, EG

SUBJECT: BOUTROS DIB'S VIEWS ON SYRIA AND EGYPT

1. SUMMARY: PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER BOUTROS DIB
ANTICIPATES SYRIAN CABINET RESHUFFLE TOWARDS RIGHT.
GOL-SARG AND GO-GOE RELATIONS CURRENTLY CONSIDERED
EXCELLENT. END SUMMARY.

2. PRESIDENTIAL ADVISER BOUTROS DIB LUNCHEDED ALONE
WITH ME YESTERDAY (JUNE 18)
DURING TWO HOUR CONVERSATION HE
WAS FULLSOME IN HIS PRAISE, NOT ONLY OF OUR SECRETARY'S
RECENT SUCCESSES IN THE AREA BUT ALL OF OUR PRESIDENT'S
TOASTS, STATEMENTS, ETC. THAT HE HAD READ. DIB
EMPHASIZED THE DRAMATIC CHANGES IN THE ENTIRE
MIDDLE EAST AND HIS AND PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S OPTIMISM
THAT A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT CAN BE ACHIEVED.
DIB SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH OF PRESIDENT'S OFFICIAL (AS DISTINCT
FROM POPULAR) RECEPTION IN DAMASCUS AND COMPARED IT WITH THAT
ACCORDED IN CAIRO. WHILE CAIRO'S WARMTH WAS NOT REPRODUCED
IN DAMASCUS, HE SAID THIS DID NOT SURPRISE HIM AT ALL
IN VIEW TRADITIONAL SYRIAN ALOOFNESS AND THE FACT THAT
SYRIAN LEADERS ARE ALWWITES. DIB DESCRIGED THE
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LATTER AS A PROUD GROUP OF MEN WHO ONLY RECENTLY

HAVE ASSUMED A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP OVER THE SYRIAN SUNNIS. HE THEREFORE WAS NOT SURPRISED THAT SAR LEADERS APPARENTLY RESTRAINED THE RECEPTION GIVEN OUR PRESIDENT, LEST THEY APPEARED TO BE COPYING THE EGYPTIAN SUNNI LEADERS.

3. DIB DESCRIBED GOL-SARG RELATIONS TODAY AS EXCELLENT, THANKS LARGELY TO PRESIDENT FRANGIE MAINTAINING CLOSE RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT ASSAD, EITHER BY FREQUENT TELEPHONE CALLS OR TRIPS BY HIS SON TONY TO DAMASCUS.

4. DIB SAID THAT HIS "PRIVATE INFORMATION" IS THAT SHORTLY WE WILL SEE MINISTERIAL CHANGES IN DAMASCUS AND THAT AMONG THOSE WHO WILL PROBABLY BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER FUNCTIONS IS THE CURRENT MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. DIB SAYS HE IS CERTAIN THAT THE CHANGES WILL REFLECT A MORE WESTWARD ORIENTATION OF SAR FOREIGN POLICY. DIB ALSO SPOKE AT SOME LENGTH OF HIS AND PRESIDENT FRANGIE'S HIGH ESTEEM FOR PRESIDENT SADAT. EGYPTIAN-LEBANESE RELATIONS, HE SAID, ARE TODAY BETTER THAN EVER BEFORE AND THERE IS CLOSE AND CONSTANT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN BEIRUT AND CAIRO. GODLEY

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